

# **Exhibit 24**

**UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

**Form 10-K**

(Mark One)

☒ **ANNUAL REPORT UNDER SECTION 13 OR 15(d)  
EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2002

OR

☐ **TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE  
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934**

For the transition period from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Commission File Number: 0-692

**NORTHWESTERN CORPORATION**

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware  
(State or other jurisdiction of  
incorporation or organization)

46-0172280  
(I.R.S. Employer  
Identification No.)

125 S. Dakota Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota  
(Address of principal executive offices)

57104  
(Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: 605-978-2908

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

(Title of each class)	(Name of each exchange on which registered)
Common Stock, \$1.75 par value, and related Common Stock Purchase Rights	
Company Obligated Mandatorily Redeemable Security of Trust Holding Solely Parent Debentures, \$25.00 liquidation amount	All listed on New York Stock Exchange
Common Stock Purchase Rights	

Securities registered under Section 12(g) of the Act:

Preferred Stock, Par Value \$100  
(Title of Class)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the past 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes ☒ No ☐

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K. ☒

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is an accelerated filer (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes ☒ No ☐

As of June 28, 2002, the aggregate market value of the voting common stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant was \$464,375,116, computed using the last sales price of \$16.95 per share of the registrant's common stock on June 28, 2002, the last business day of the registrant's most recently completed second fiscal quarter, as reported by the New York Stock Exchange.

As of April 7, 2003, 37,396,762 shares of the registrant's common stock, par value \$1.75 per share, were outstanding.

Documents Incorporated by Reference

None

## Part I

### ITEM 1. BUSINESSES

#### OVERVIEW

NorthWestern Corporation is one of the largest providers of electricity and natural gas in the Upper Midwest and Northwest, serving approximately 598,000 customers in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska. We have generated and distributed electricity in South Dakota and distributed natural gas in South Dakota and Nebraska since 1923 through our energy division, NorthWestern Energy, formerly NorthWestern Public Service. In February 2002, we completed the acquisition of the electric and natural gas transmission and distribution business of The Montana Power Company for \$478 million in cash and the assumption of \$511 million in existing debt and mandatorily redeemable preferred securities of subsidiary trusts of The Montana Power Company, net of cash received. As a result of the acquisition, from February 15, 2002, the closing date of the acquisition, through November 15, 2002, we distributed electricity and natural gas in Montana through our wholly owned subsidiary, NorthWestern Energy LLC. Effective November 15, 2002, we transferred all of the energy and natural gas transmission and distribution operations of NorthWestern Energy LLC to NorthWestern Corporation and since that date, we have operated that business as part of our NorthWestern Energy division. We are operating our utility business under the common name "NorthWestern Energy" in all our service territories.

We operate our business in five reporting segments:

- electric utility operations;
- natural gas utility operations;
- communications;
- heating, ventilation and air conditioning, or HVAC, and plumbing related services; and
- all other, which primarily consists of our other miscellaneous service and non-energy related operations and activities that are not included in the other identified segments, together with the unallocated corporate costs and investments, and any eliminating amounts.

For additional information related to our industry segments, see Note 23 of "Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements," included in Item 8 herein.

We also have made significant investments in three non-energy businesses:

- Expanets, Inc., or Expanets, a provider of networked communications and data services and solutions to medium sized businesses nationwide;
- Blue Dot Services Inc., or Blue Dot, a nationwide provider of air conditioning, heating, plumbing and related services; and
- CornerStone Propane Partners, L.P., or CornerStone, a publicly traded limited partnership (OTC: CNPP.PK) that is a retail propane and wholesale energy related commodities distributor.

Our experience with our non-energy businesses has been very disappointing. They have adversely impacted our overall results of operations, financial condition and liquidity for the past three years. See Note 23 of "Notes to Consolidated Financial Statements," included in Item 8 herein. We have written off our investment in CornerStone and have written off substantially all of our investments in Expanets and Blue Dot. In particular, Expanets has suffered from the continued deterioration of business in the telecommunications markets and billings and collections problems caused by the problems encountered